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I rise today to support House Resolution 1213, a resolution expressing support for National Lab Day and the need to improve science and math education.

National Lab Day, to be held on May 12th, will give middle and high school students access to hands-on, discovery-based laboratory opportunities. Additionally, National Lab Day will provide schools with an opportunity to assess and upgrade their current lab facilities. I am pleased that nearly 200 organizations representing science and math professionals and educators are supporting National Lab Day.

National Lab Day is a terrific initiative that comes at a time when we need an “all-hands-on-deck” mentality to provide our children with a first-rate math and science education. We still don't know how to cure cancer or AIDS, or completely ease the suffering of those with mental illnesses. We still have tremendous challenges regarding energy consumption. And we still don't know all we should about our planet and the people who live on it. The answers to these important questions are beginning to be formed in our classrooms with young students who one day may go on to investigate these issues and make advances that will benefit all of us.

Scientists and teachers long have been concerned about the quality of science and math education. Yet, scientists and educators should not be the only ones troubled by our students' mediocre performance in these subjects. Every citizen concerned about the long-term health of our Nation's economy should be worried by our current educational performance. Parents who want their children to succeed in a new global economy should be interested. Patients in need of new medical advances and citizens who want to see technological progress should care about our Nation's performance in this area.

It is clear that our Nation must improve mathematics and science education in our elementary and secondary schools. American students do not perform as satisfactorily in these subjects as compared with their peers in other nations, which threatens the long-term health of our Nation's economy and our competitiveness. China, India, and Germany, to name three, are putting more emphasis on science and math education. These nations recognize that the jobs of the future will require a basic understanding of these subjects. In fact, the Department of Labor recently found that three-quarters of the 20 fastest-growing future occupations will need workers with significant mathematics or science preparation.

A decade ago, I had the honor to serve on the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, which became known as the John Glenn Commission. In a report entitled "Before It's Too Late", we made clear that our Nation must increase the number of teachers in those fields significantly and provide more opportunities for teachers to enhance their math and science teaching skills. Ten years later, I still believe policymakers must do more to support the teachers that play a critical role in science and math education. The Commission recommended that teachers receive the greatest attention, even ahead of curriculum or other areas.

As a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, I have been focused on ways to do just that. I have worked to boost resources for the underfunded Mathematics and Science Partnerships, which provides professional development opportunities to a wide range of teachers and helps them continue improving their skills. I have worked on a bipartisan basis with my colleague Rep. *Vern Ehlers* to ensure that reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act places the same importance on science as it does for other subjects, such as English.

In today's tight budget environment, I applaud the Obama Administration for proposing historic increases in the federal government's commitment to science education in their Fiscal Year 2011 Budget. I was pleased to see \$300 million in the Department of Education budget for improving teaching and learning in science and math. When considering any replacement to the Mathematics and Science Partnerships program, we must recognize that great teachers are made, not born. I feel strongly that any new program must continue to support professional development activities for science and math teachers as they seek to improve their craft. In addition, any new program must ensure that professional development programs are widely available across the country, not just to a few schools that compete successfully because they are already top notch.

Improving our children's abilities in science and math is critical for our economy, our national security, and our democracy. Everyone, from scientist to teacher to parent to businessperson, should be concerned with how well we educate our children in this area. I look forward to working with my colleagues to fulfill the goals of the Glenn Commission and regain our Nation's leadership in science and math education.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution that recognizes the importance of science and math education and highlights the good work done at National Lab Day.